


LONDON
REVIEW PANEL


Director
DP9

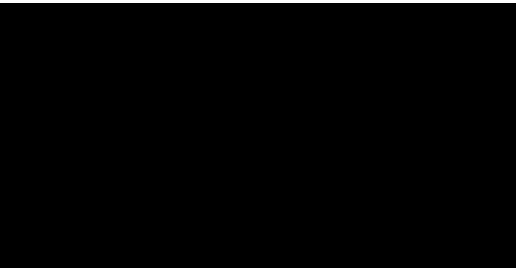
June 2023

Dear 

London Review Panel: Plot 1 Bishopsgate Goodsynd

Please find enclosed the London Review Panel report following the design review of Plot 1, Bishopsgate Goodsynd on 17 May 2023. I would like to thank you for your participation in the review and offer ongoing Mayor's Design Advocate support as the scheme's design develops.

Yours sincerely,



Mayor's Design Advocate

cc.

All meeting attendees

Jules Pipe, Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills

Philip Graham, Executive Director of Good Growth, GLA

Louise Duggan, Head of Regeneration, GLA

LONDON

REVIEW PANEL

Report of London Review Panel meeting for Bishopsgate Goodsynd, LB Hackney and LB Tower Hamlets

17 May 2023

Buckley Gray Yeoman Studio, Tea Building, 56 Shoreditch High St, London E1 6JJ

London Review Panel

MDA (Chair)

MDA

MDA

MDA

Attendees

LB Hackney

LB Hackney

LB Tower Hamlets

LB Tower Hamlets

GLA Planning

GLA Planning

GLA Planning

GLA Regeneration

Frame Projects

Report copied to

Jules Pipe

Philip Graham

Louise Duggan

Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills

GLA Executive Director of Good Growth

GLA Head of Regeneration

GLA Regeneration

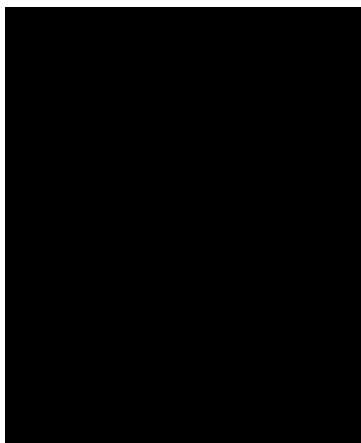
Confidentiality and publication

Please note that while schemes not yet in the public domain, for example at a pre-application stage, will be treated as confidential, as a public organisation the GLA is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) and in the case of an FOI request may be obliged to release project information submitted for review. Review reports will target publication to the London Review Panel webpage six months following the review unless otherwise agreed.

Project location

Bishopsgate Goodsyards, Braithwaite Street, London

Presenting team



Ballymore Group
Ballymore Group
Ballymore Group
Hammerson
Buckley Gray Yeoman
Gensler
Gensler
DP9 Ltd
Spacehub
Spacehub

Planning context and background

This was the first London Review Panel meeting to discuss Bishopsgate Goodsyards since the outline permission was granted in March 2022. Detailed permission was granted for Plots 2 and 7. There will be four reserved matters applications: RMA 1 for Plots 4, 5, 10a, b, c (residential) and 6 (cultural); RMA 2 – Plot 1 (office); RMA 3 – Plot 8 (hotel and residential); RMA 4 – Plot 3 (office). The min and max height, use, floorspace and building parameter plans have been agreed as part of the outline permission, which is supported by approved design codes.

The London Review Panel's views on emerging reserved matters proposals for Plot 1 were sought at this meeting. The site is bounded by Bethnal Green Road to the north, Shoreditch High Street to the west and Middle Road to the South. The proposals comprise of an office building of up to 89m in height providing a maximum 54,230 sqm of office floorspace and 945 sqm of retail on ground floor.

Heritage constraints include the Grade II listed Braithwaite Viaduct and Grade II listed gate, walls, window (Oriel Gateway) on Shoreditch High Street. A total of 5 Conservation Areas are situated adjacent to the site. One of which, the Brick Lane and Fournier Street Conservation Area incorporates the north-eastern edge of the site on Sclater Street. Parts of the Goods Yard site lie within the London View Management Framework's Background Wider Setting Consultation Areas. The building parameters have already taken these considerations into account during the outline permission.

There are also a number of infrastructure constraints that affect the site including Central Line tunnels and a BT communications tunnel which sit 17 metres and 28 metres below ground respectively across the site. The boxed London Overground line runs above ground through the site, which also houses Shoreditch High Street Overground station. In the

southern part of the site is the six-track West Anglia mainline and suburban line and an additional area safeguarded for two future tracks, known as the “eight-track safeguarding”.

The London Boroughs of Hackney and Tower Hamlets highlighted that the plinth height of Plot 1, is not in accordance with the design code. They would also encourage a simpler, common architectural language to achieve a more cohesive whole. More detailed comments have been provided as part of pre-application discussions on the setback glazed element at level 5, the articulation of the facades including corner treatments, and the massing on Middle Road. They would also like to see further design development of the proposals for Station Square.

GLA planning asked for the panel’s views on the plinth height, architecture and materiality, the setbacks, the quality and experience of Middle Road, and the public realm and landscape design.

London Review Panel’s Views

Summary

The London Review Panel finds much to admire in the emerging reserved matters proposals for Plot 1 of Bishopsgate Goodsynd. It appreciates the complexity of the design challenge, and that there are differing views on a number of design issues, including the plinth height which is a storey lower than required by the design code.

In the panel’s view, departing from approved design codes can be a normal part of the planning process, where benefits can be demonstrated, for example improved safety or legibility of the public realm. Continuing design development will be needed in consultation with the local planning authorities and GLA to reach consensus on these issues. The panel’s comments are intended to support this process, by providing analysis of the design options and recommendations for improvements. The panel did not reach a unanimous view on the plinth height. However, the majority of panel members feel a case could be made for this being four storeys as currently proposed, with a glazed set back at level 5. As part of this process, further exploration of the architecture and materiality would be encouraged.

Detailed comments on the plinth, set back level 5 and vertical link and circulation cores are provided below. In general, the panel would encourage greater simplicity and cohesiveness in the architectural expression of the scheme. The amount of publicly accessible open space is welcomed. Middle Road will have a challenging microclimate, and this needs to inform its design, and tree planting. The podium level landscape promises to be very successful, keeping the essence of what currently exists on the viaduct. However, the stair leading to it would benefit from greater generosity. The Station Square although a small area of the site, will be critical to the success of the scheme, and needs more thought. It is also essential that the North-South link is perceived as, and functions as, a public route. All areas of the public realm need careful thought about surveillance and sight lines, to ensure they feel well overlooked and safe.

Brick plinth and its role in the streetscape

- The majority of panel members would support the brick plinth being four storeys as currently proposed, with a glazed set back at level 5 – although it is recognised that this is a deviation from the approved design code.
- One panel member voiced an alternative view that this shift in balance between the plinth and upper element of the building could appear ungainly. The visual thinness of a single storey of the plinth bridging the viaduct was also highlighted.
- The option of a break in the plinth where it meets the viaduct has been considered, and this would be one way to avoid a visually thin section of brick bridging over it.
- The brick materiality of the plinth is welcomed, but the panel asks the design team to maximise active frontage and minimise solid wall on Bethnal Green Road. The Box Park has made this a busy edge, and it would be a shame to lose this.
- The success of Bethnal Green Road as a significant high street will depend on the scheme creating vibrant ground floor uses. Dead frontage should be minimised, and every effort should be made to contribute to a thriving local economy at street level.

Glazed setback at level 5

- The panel thinks the setback is successful in allowing the steel framed upper part of the building to 'float' above the brick plinth.
- However, it suggests expressing the transfer structure at level 5 more robustly in the façade design. Better structural expression would give an industrial character that would be an appropriate response to the Eric Parry scheme for Plot 2.
- The potential for public amenities or publicly accessible open space as part of the programme for level 5 could help support the case for the change in plinth height. This will be visible from street level, and provision of public uses here would be a benefit.

Vertical circulation cores

- The panel encourages further work to develop the architecture of the vertical circulation cores on both the north and south elevations, which feel less well resolved than other elements of the building.
- The panel thinks that the façade treatment of the circulation core would be more successful extended to the ground, rather than sitting on the brick plinth.
- The vertical circulation core would also be more legible on the façade if arranged with the staircase on the perimeter. However, the panel appreciates the current arrangement is designed to allow more daylight into the floorplate.

Architecture and materiality

- In general, the panel supports the materiality with a brick plinth and steel and glass upper element, separated by a glazed set back. However, it recommends further refinement of the architectural expression.
- It recognises that the designs are intended to respond to the historic warehouse character of the Tea Building, and the contemporary industrial character of Plot 2.
- However, the panel would encourage the design team to explore how the architecture could be simpler and more cohesive.
- Although the brick is a veneer with a structural frame behind, the panel would encourage its detailing to give a feel of solidity and mass.
- The panel supports the rounded corner where this eases pedestrian flow at the junction of Bethnal Green Road and Shoreditch High Street. It also supports the decision to express the steel framed upper element with square corners.
- There is no similar need for a curved corner where Middle Road meets the Oriel Stair and Lift. Alternative approaches to the design of this corner could be explored.
- The upper part of the building appears to be fully glazed. Both the London Boroughs of Hackney and Tower Hamlets have declared a climate emergency, and the panel asks for evidence that this has informed the façade designs.
- Material colours vary between the images presented. It will be important to clarify what is proposed, to ensure this relates well to the prominent Plot 2 building and diverse townscape context.

Middle Road

- The panel supports tree planting as proposed, subject to the selection of species that will thrive in shady conditions.
- It also welcomes the use of small kiosks to provide animation in areas that would otherwise have blank walls.
- Microclimate analysis is needed to demonstrate that Middle Road will be a comfortable environment. The panel queries whether it will be too windy to sit outside, and if so, how this can be mitigated?

Podium level landscape

- The scissor stair linking Middle Road to the podium level landscape is welcomed, but more thought is needed about how to give this an appropriate sense of grandeur at both levels.
- The landscape design at podium level promises to be very successful, keeping the essence of what currently exists on the viaduct.

Station Square

- The Station Square although a small area of the site, will be critical to the success of the scheme. It currently appears the least well resolved element of the designs.
- An early image of Station Square showed it as being marked with a gantry, which would have helped to create a landmark for the station entrance. The panel encourages further thought about how similar legibility could be achieved.
- Building to the maximum parameters of the outline approval creates restricted sight lines to the station entrance from the Station Gateway on Bethnal Green Road.
- The panel would encourage further work to explore how a more generous approach to the station could be created, for example through further chamfering of the building lines.
- Consideration should also be given to whether Braithwaite Street could be pedestrianised, to provide for spill out from the station, and space to dwell or meet.
- Maximising activity in Station Square, for example with a coffee shop, could help create a safer environment.
- Improvements to the route under the viaduct should also be clarified, for example lighting and public art.

North-South Link

- It is essential that the North-South Link is perceived as, and functions as a public route. This is unlikely to be achieved with the glazed entrance doors at each end, which will create the feeling of a private lobby.
- The Link has a service yard to its west, and the station exclusion zone to its east, which generates long blank walls on both sides.
- Every effort should be made to create animation in the link, for example through the use of small kiosks, as already proposed on Middle Road.

- The entrance to the North-South Link on Bethnal Road is also very important, and currently underplayed. The panel would encourage the team to draw inspiration from the historic Oriel Gateway on Shoreditch High Street.

Pedestrian safety

- Whilst the panel applauds the extent of publicly accessible open space, it will be essential to ensure this is well overlooked and feels safe.
- The scheme includes basements, arches, and external staircases, which will require careful thought about surveillance and sight lines.

Next steps

The London Review Panel would be available to comment on the scheme again at the next stage of design development, if requested to do so.